

Dr. COOPER CURTICE

1856

Born: Stamford, Connecticut, May 7.

1881

Received the degree of B.S. in Natural History from Cornell University.

1881-1882

Attended medical lectures at the University of Michigan, transferred to the Columbia Veterinary College, also instructor in histology at Michigan.
1883

Received the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science, from Columbia Veterinary College. Began brilliant investigations for U.S. Geological Survey.

1886

Cooper Curtice matriculated at the National Medical College of Columbian University, now George Washington University.

1888

He received the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

From 1886 to 1891, he was an Agent in the BAI and ~~began his studies in parasitology~~ which in 1891 were organized into the Zoological Laboratory

1891

Resigned from the BAI and went home to Moravia, New York, because the desk he had was too near the roof and was exposed to the extremes of heat and cold and he was always afflicted by respiratory infections, colds etc.

Texas Fever

Cooper Curtice was concerned, as early as 1888, about the scourge of Texas Fever, and the economic loss of cattle. After the ~~Texas~~ Fever riddle had been solved, Cooper Curtice immediately envisaged the practical aspects of eradicating cattle ticks, and it is in this historic setting that we have the beginnings of tick eradication. Cooper Curtice knew that something could be done about the cattle tick, and it was this fanaticism born of knowledge and based on intimate understanding of the cattle tick, that gave him the courage of his convictions.

The strangest part of the study is found in the "opposition" to these new tick theories, and this opposition made the problem of Texas Fever, all the more insurmountable, because some of the opposition originated with members of Cooper Curtice's own profession. Later Theobald Smith expressed amazement because "It took over 5 years for Europe to even believe the fact," but it took many people in the United States equally as long to believe the fact.

After he left the Bureau of Animal Industry his work on tick eradication was in the nature of free-lance work, and at great personal sacrifice to his family. He wrote letters and articles for farm journals, veterinary magazines, gave popular lectures, pleaded with politicians, farmers, and made actual field demonstrations.

In 1893 he asked that J. Sterling Morton, the Secretary of Agriculture, consider his name as a candidate for the position of Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry. His request was refused, but later, through the patronage of a friend was reappointed as livestock agent on September 4, 1894.

In 1895 he wrote a series of letters to Dr. Salmon to the effect that "The whole evidence points out that the ticks are not a necessary evil and that with a little care they can be eradicated!" After these letters from Georgia, Cooper Curtice was transferred to Virginia. Before leaving to retrace the quarantine line in Virginia, Cooper Curtice asked Dr. Salmon if he should base his findings on the presence of ticks or on the report of disease. He replied, "on ticks", "This was the first acknowledgement to me that tick country was identical with the Texas fever country and the absence of ticks indicated disease free country....."

In 1896 he sent some manuscripts of information to be distributed to farmers on tick eradication to the Bureau, but heard nothing from it. He then sent similar manuscripts to the Virginia Polytechnical Institute for consideration and received a reply from Dr. E. P. Niles, "Could you not also change the tone of the article to some advantage". Not satisfied

the progress toward tick eradication, on June 24, 1896, Cooper Curtice addressed the Virginia State Veterinary Medical Association and in a lengthy speech stated, "It is the relationship between the tick and the disease and the means of eradicating them from Virginia and the United States to which I invite your attention!" "The Spanish invader was responsible for the ticks and the disease in the United States. Curtice said, "Could he have planned as diligently as he did inquisition methods to have left behind a plague which would harass his foe for ages he could scarcely have found a better means than the tick." "I look most eagerly for the cleansing of even a certain portion of the infected territory under the direct intention of man for it opens the way to pushing the ticks back to the Spanish isles and Mexico and liberating cattle from disease and pest and the farmer from untold money losses. Let your war-cry to death to the ticks."

In October 1896, in an article in the Southern Planter, he cites the need for Federal and State participation in eradication of the cattle tick, and stated, "When the ticks have disappeared, a new cattle industry will arise in these parts and thrive, the fields and buildings will improve, and more of the home comforts come to the people". "While the above remarks have been locally applied in Virginia, the same may be said for any other state and the more that is known and learned of the destruction of ticks in any State, the more convincing the truth of the statement that ticks may in time be exterminated from the United States.

"Owing to continued losses from this source and the expenses associated with perpetual quarantine, there is no sanitary work connected with cattle that will pay the State and Federal Government so large returns on the money expended as an extended campaign in the extermination of ticks from (infested areas).

"the infested area."

After publication of this article in the Southern Planter, Cooper Curtice was "fired" without notice on November 28, 1896.

In a December 3, 1896 letter to the Secretary of Agriculture he mentioned unfinished investigations, then stated, "But of far more economic importance than the above is the unfinished condition of certain field work in restricting the area of the cattle-tick.

Better tick eradication than to live with the disease and try to inoculate against it. "Without entering into a discussion of the prosperity of the Federal Government undertaking to cleanse the tick - the means of spreading disease - from its borders, I desire to call to your attention a class of field experiments by which it may be demonstrated to States that the eradication of the tick plague from their borders depends solely upon themselves."

Virginia was mentioned as a possible example for the rest of the country.

The next day December 4, 1896 he writes a letter to the Chief of the BAI, stating that there seems to have been some misunderstanding regarding the nature of my work in Virginia during the past season. While I was detailed to take charge in the field of inoculated cattle I supposed that I was to do what I could in creating a sentiment which would eventually lead to experiments in freeing farms of ticks. Freeing of country around New Port News and Norfolk would release the contiguous areas from quarantine and the danger of outbreaks of disease which would endanger the whole cattle trade of the United States. Fulfillment of the work would moreover furnish a practical test to all of the affected states whereby they could remove the quarantine and all danger of spreading disease to other states.

For best success this work should be begun at once for much of it depends on personal instruction.

This letter was not answered by Dr. Salmon, but by Varanus Moore, stating "...I was naturally much interested in this experiment. If successful it would be a practical demonstration to the South that the elimination of Texas Fever from their cattle is within their power...."

In the years that followed, Cooper Curtice pleaded for a job in the Bureau of Animal Industry, but Dr. Salmon was not interested in tick eradication. In his last letter to Cooper Curtice on April 7, 1905 he said there were too many more important things for the Bureau to do than worry about supporting a campaign against Texas fever and the tick.

After the termination of Bureau appointment (employment) in 1896, Cooper Curtice still carried on his crusade for tick eradication from his home at Moravia, New York. He sent an article to the Southern Planter which was subsequently published in January 1897. Kill all ticks, every one counts.

Later in 1897, Cooper Curtice investigated an extensive outbreak of Texas Fever in Massachusetts, and reported it to Massachusetts authorities, indicating that the BAI might have been able to help in the situation or in preventing it, - which the government had not done.

While working in New York in 1898, Dr. Moore (Varnus)?? wired Curtice to meet a trustee of North Carolina College on commencement day. I just made it, and agreed to join the College and Experiment Station in November 1898. He had previously agreed through Dr. Walcott to join a party to hunt fossils. I told the trustee that I could do a service in tick eradication".

As State Veterinarian in North Carolina he immediately fostered tick eradication. He formed cattle clubs that did their own inspecting and watching over several sections and the whole scheme worked out most satisfactorily, and finally resulted in clearing of a very large infected area. He handled the North Carolina Legislators most successfully.

In 1900 Cooper Curtice resigned his position in North Carolina to accept a position at the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. In subsequent years he continued his interests in tick eradication, and in seeking federal aid.. By 1905 he could state ----- The recent convention of the Commissioners of Agriculture of the Cotton States was an epoch-making one for the cattle industry of the country and its effects will be far reaching. War was declared against the cattle tick, and eradication was shown to be easy, practicable, and profitable.